

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS
OF THE
SKELTON AND BROTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.



Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year 1940 which, in accordance with the instructions of the Minister of Health, is confined to essential and urgent matters which have affected the public health.

The population is estimated to have fallen slightly; the birth-rate, the death-rate, and the infant mortality rate are all definitely below the average local rate for 1934-38.

The incidence of notifiable disease was average or below, except in the case of diphtheria and cerebro-spinal fever.

Ten cases of Cerebro-spinal fever were notified; this prevalence was shared by the adjoining districts and the country as a whole. In the Combined Districts a total of 32 cases were notified, but in one of these the diagnosis was later corrected to tuberculous meningitis. In addition to these, three additional cases were brought into the districts for hospital treatment. Most cases occurred in the second quarter of the year, when 14 cases arose; in 12 the onset was in the first quarter, 5 in the third, and 3 in the last quarter. The month of highest incidence was May, with nine cases.

The two sexes were almost equally attacked, 18 being male, and 16 female, but the age incidence in the two sexes differed:

Age:	Under 5	5—14	15—19	20—24	25—34	35—44	45—54	55—64
Male:	2	3	5	7	1	—	—	—
Female:	5	3	2	1	1	1	1	2

Sixteen cases were regarded as severe, 8 male and 8 female; two males in the 20-24 age group and one female under 5 died. One girl of 16 years was left with complete nerve deafness. Cases were treated with lumbar puncture, sulphonamide or sulphopyridine, and antimeningococcic serum.

There were fifteen cases of diphtheria notified: five in the month of May and four in October. All were children, from 2 years of age to 16, and none had been immunised; there was one death from this disease, but this did not occur until the current year had just commenced and therefore does not figure in the total of deaths for 1940.

Circular 2230, on Diphtheria Prophylaxis, was issued by the Minister of Health on December 7th, 1940, wherein the value of the immunisation of children in the prevention of diphtheria was emphasised. A local scheme for the free immunisation of children against diphtheria had received the approval of the Minister at the end of 1934 but he now intimated that the immunising toxoid could be obtained by Local Authorities free of charge. Medical Practitioners were circularised on the subject, and publicity obtained through the press, and the elementary schools, the head teachers of which have always given every assistance. Reference was made at some length in last year's Annual Report to the progress made locally in immunisation. The following table brings the information as to numbers of children protected in the Combined Districts up-to-date:—

Children Immunised Against Diphtheria.

		Guisborough U.D.	Loftus U.D.	Redcar Borough	Saltburn and Marske U.D.	Skelton and Brotton U.D.
1935—1939	...	407	342	1228	473	323
1940	...	29	—	59	151	139
First half 1941	...	84	72	330	110	151
Total immunised						
1935—30/6/1941	...	520	414	1617	734	621
Estimated total number of children aged 1—9 years old in 1941	...	880	826	3340	640	1516
Percentage immunised		59%	50%	48½%	115%	41%

Some of the children immunised in the earlier years are now over nine years old so that the estimate, in the last line of the table, of the present percentage of children at these ages immunised is an over-statement, but, at any rate, the table will serve to show the minimum number of children in each district that still require to be immunised before a tolerably perfect protection against diphtheria can be obtained.

It is perhaps too early as yet to endeavour to draw from local statistics any evidence of the amount of protection against diphtheria afforded by immunisation. The following figures, however, are given as a temporary estimate. In the Combined Districts from 1935 until the end of 1939, 2,773 children had been immunised; in 1940 there were approximately 10,303 children in these districts over one year old and under fifteen. If one assumes that all the children immunised had remained in the district it follows that there were roughly 7,530 children at 1—14 years of age not immunised. In 1940 there were among immunised children two cases of diphtheria (a rate of 0·7 cases per thousand) and among non-immunised children at these ages forty cases (5·3 cases per thousand). It would seem therefore as if immunisation had reduced the risk of catching diphtheria by six-sevenths. The two cases in immunised children recovered

without causing anxiety ; among the non-immunised children there were four deaths—
or a fatality rate of ten per cent.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

C. R. GIBSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

Guisborough,

29th September, 1941.

Vital Statistics for 1940:

Population, estimated for mid-1940 by Registrar-General: 12,480.

Number of births, 187 ; birth-rate 15·0.

(Average 1934—38: 215·4 ; birth-rate 16·6).

Number of deaths of residents, 145 ; death-rate 11·6.

(Average 1934—1938: 173·2 ; death-rate 13·3).

Infant Mortality Rate: 48 infant deaths per thousand births.

(Average 1934—38: 78).

Notifications received: Pneumonia, 3 ; scarlet fever, 9 ; diphtheria, 15 ; cerebro-spinal
fever, 10 ; enteric fever, 1 ; measles, 7.

Tuberculosis (new cases) ; 10 pulmonary ; 4 non-pulmonary.

